



Dorking Nursery School and Children's Centre

VOLUNTEER POLICY

The Centre recognises the important and unique role which our volunteers play in enhancing the quality of provision within the centre.

The volunteering experience should be beneficial to volunteers, in terms of their personal experience as well as being of value to the Centre

This policy sets out clear guidelines regarding the involvement of volunteers in order to ensure their fair and equitable involvement, supported in line with good practice and in a manner that minimises risk for all concerned.

It also aims to make clear to all volunteers the hopes and expectations that the Centre has of them and also to ensure that all volunteers understand what they in turn can expect from the Centre.

Volunteers are covered by Health & Safety and Data Protection laws but there is currently no legislation that specifically covers volunteers. However, the Centre is committed to providing volunteers with fair and equitable treatment as described in this Volunteers Policy.

The relationship between the Centre and its volunteers is non-contractual and any commitments are not intended to be legally binding. If the relationship between the Centre and a volunteer is found by a tribunal to be legally a contract of employment, the volunteer would be entitled to the full range of employment rights, including the right to claim unfair dismissal and minimum wage.

Volunteers should only be provided with Training that is directly relevant to their role.

The Centre welcomes interest in volunteering from all sections of the community and recognises the value in having a diverse workforce of volunteers. However every volunteer must agree to a DBS check and will only be allowed to work on the premises once this has been shown to be satisfactory and meets all the criteria relating to the centres safeguarding and child protection policy.

Under-18

Under-18s are classed as vulnerable and the Centre will take this into account when involving them as volunteers.

Every effort will be made to ensure that a proper judgement can be made of whether placing a young person in a voluntary role would place them or the people with whom they were volunteering at risk.

Under-18's who volunteer will be under constant adult supervision.

Volunteers from Overseas

There is no restriction on people from EU and EEA countries coming to the UK to volunteer.

People from outside the EU and EEA who have a visa to work or study in the UK may volunteer as long as they are still undertaking the activity that is stated on their visa.

It is possible to get a visa to come to the UK to volunteer, however this must be arranged in advance and certain restrictions apply.

A DBS check may not provide a complete picture of any criminal record that may exist for overseas applicants. When looking to involve a volunteer from overseas in a role that requires a DBS check, guidance should be sought from the Resourcing Team. Further information can be found at the Overseas Information Service on the DBS website.

Where an individual presents a disclosure, or other equivalent information in any other form from another country, The Centre will contact the issuing body and consult with the DBS to check the validity of the document.

Student and Work Placements

People who are also completing a related course of study, e.g. NVQ's, may fulfil volunteer opportunities. Arrangements may be set out in a placement agreement of some kind. This type of volunteer may require more from their supervisors in terms of support and monitoring, and supervisors may also be expected to commit to a number of meetings with placement coordinators or external assessors. The Centre cannot guarantee that a Voluntary Supervisor will be available to support a student and as such individuals will be considered on an case by case basis taking into account the resources available at the given time.

Placements where there is a requirement or compulsion to attend (e.g. if it is a condition of receiving state benefits), are not considered to be volunteering and are not covered by this policy.

Work Experience placements are not covered by this policy.

Volunteer Drivers

The Centre will ask that all volunteers whose activities involve driving confirm that they possess a valid licence to drive and are prepared to take an approved driving check test when appropriate. E.g. Mini bus.

For volunteers using their own cars, the Centre will also ask the volunteer to confirm that they have appropriate motor insurance and tax in place and that the vehicles are roadworthy (current MOT, tyres checked, etc.).

For volunteers using vehicles that the Centre has hired and insured (e.g. minibuses), particular attention should be paid to the volunteer's driving licence to ensure they do qualify to operate the type of vehicle being used.

Volunteers using their own vehicles should be reimbursed expenses in-line with HMRC tax-free approved mileage allowance payment rates.

One off volunteering

Occasionally the Centre may involve people in a one-off volunteering activity, e.g. supporting a particular event. This type of volunteer involvement may not be subject to the full range of procedures outlined in this policy.

Such volunteers should still have a named supervisor responsible for their involvement and they should receive a suitable induction.

Opportunities for Paid Employment

The Centre recognises that some people take up volunteering as a route to employment and, whilst the organisation cannot make any guarantees that volunteering will lead to paid employment, it is committed to helping such volunteers gain skills and experience that will make them more employable.

Volunteers are entitled to apply to become bank or temporary staff within The Centre.

In the event that volunteers become paid staff in this way then organisation should ensure there is complete clarity in regard to the different activities, rights and responsibilities of any paid job in relation to the volunteering role.

Benefits

People who receive State benefits can volunteer and, in nearly all cases, their benefits will not be affected. However, there are some cases where benefits can be affected.

People can volunteer as many hours as they like while they're getting benefits as long as they keep to the rules for getting them.

Volunteers will still need to be looking for paid work. They must be free to go to an interview if given 48 hours' notice and they must be able to start work within one week of being given notice.

For more information please read the DWP leaflet (1023) 'Volunteering While Getting Benefits'

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the organisations Public Liability, Products Liability and Employers' Liability insurance.

Risk assessment

A role-based risk assessment should be carried out for each volunteer role by their named supervisor or the person with overall responsibility for involving volunteers locally.

The assessments should ensure that any specific hazards relating to the volunteer or volunteering role are included, for example taking into account the volunteers experience and understanding in this type of work and any previous training.

Risk assessments should also be carried out for hazards that have not been covered within the scope of the role-based assessments, for example tasks such as lone working, organising special events, driving, etc.

The Centre's Risk Assessment Procedures should be followed in all cases.

Health and Safety

It is the duty of all volunteers to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst volunteering. All volunteers have a duty to cooperate with the Centre, as far as is necessary, to enable safe and healthy conditions prevail.

Volunteers are expected to comply with the Centre Health and Safety Policy and procedures. They should familiarise themselves with those aspects of the policy and procedures which relate to their own role and to attach at least as much importance to them as they attach to carrying out of any other duties which they may have. Please refer to the Health and Safety policy for further information and guidance.

Volunteers are also expected to comply with the Centre Lone Working policy.

Procedures

PLANNING VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Any part of the Centre planning to involve volunteers must commit appropriate resources to their support in terms of staff and management time, training, materials and the reimbursement of expenses.

Existing staff, volunteers and participants in the Centre should be involved in discussing the rationale for involving volunteers and can contribute ideas as to the kinds of activities volunteers could undertake.

RECRUITMENT

Ideally, each volunteering opportunity will be defined by a role description that outlines potential tasks to be performed, any required skills and experience, location and likely time commitment.

Opportunities should be promoted in ways that are accessible to all sections of the community, e.g. local/national advertising; www.do-it.org.uk; use of Volunteer Centres; direct contact with local organisations (e.g. community centres, colleges); posters in local area(s); mailing; internal memos; open information sessions; and liaison with businesses/organisations with an interest.

At times recruitment may be targeted toward individuals with specific skills, or individuals and groups under-represented within the current service.

Occasionally a volunteering opportunity may be created in response to an approach from someone with particular skills or interests. However, there remains a responsibility to check that this person is suitable for the tasks identified.

There are various tools to enable the organisation to identify whether a person is suitable for a volunteering opportunity. These include; personal statement, CV, application form, informal interview, DBS check and references.

At least two people should be involved in selecting volunteers, using a fair and transparent decision-making process, with constructive feedback offered to those who are not selected to volunteer.

SUPPORT & TRAINING

Induction

Volunteers will be briefed on their role and be able to ask any questions relating to it.

Volunteers should be encouraged to read any relevant policies and legislation pertaining to their area of volunteering.

Volunteers should have the opportunity to shadow relevant members of staff or existing volunteers.

Training

Volunteers should only be given appropriate training that is relevant to their role.

All volunteers should be made aware of all the Centre's policies and procedures.

The Centre will always endeavour to signpost volunteers towards available training and/or extended learning courses.

MONITORING & RECOGNITION

The views of volunteers, and those that supervise volunteers will be represented through mechanisms such as team meetings, reviews, annual reports and exit interviews. These mechanisms should also ensure that the volunteering relationship remains mutually beneficial.

The above monitoring mechanisms should be used by The Centre to recognise the value of volunteers and to thank them for their support.

Where volunteering is being undertaken as a route to employment a 'Record of Achievement' or similar document should be maintained and presented on completion of volunteering.

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT & CONDUCT

Volunteers are expected to make a genuine commitment to the aims and values of the Centre; uphold centre policies, procedures and decisions; and should not do anything, which actually or potentially may put the centres reputation at risk.

Volunteers should be reliable and trustworthy and should show courtesy, efficiency, reliability, and punctuality.

As part of their induction volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's expectations in relation to punctuality, absence-reporting and general conduct.

RESOLVING PROBLEMS

The relationship between the Centre and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is vital that the Centre maintains agreed standards of service to its visitors and participants, and that volunteers should feel safe and supported in making their contribution to this service. It is hoped that any problems encountered can be dealt with fairly, transparently and, in the first instance, informally. However, if a problem persists, the Centre Grievance procedures should be followed. At all times the volunteer should be enabled to freely state their case and may be accompanied by a friend if they wish.

Approved by the Governing Body: September 2017

To be reviewed by: September 2020

Relevant for:-

Children's Centre: Yes	Nursery: Yes	Parents: Yes
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